suring a good price to the producers are being made.

Statement

Export of Processed Mica

Years	Quantity (KGs)	Value (Rs. Lakhs)
1993-94	1.580	716
1994-95	1.350	617
1995-96	1.299	540
1996-97	5.304	814

Export of Canalised Mica Scrap

Years	Quantity (MT)	Value (Rs. Lakhs)
1993-94	4.573	744
1994-95	5.854	909
1995-96	7.443	1.181
1996-97	8.641	1.422

Production, Consumption and Export of Mica

2157. SHRI BRATIN SENGUPTA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the production, consumption and export of mica during the last ten years with year-wise break-up;

(b) whether there is any slump in the world trade of mica in this period; and

(c) the contribution of MITCO in production, trade and giving employment in the same period?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) Sir, the details regarding production of Mica Crude and Waste & Scrap, and consumption are given in the enclosed Statement. *(See* below). The exports during the last ten years is an under:—

Year	Exports (Incl. Powder, Waste & Scrap) (Quantity in tonnes)
1987-88	38095
1988-89	47788
1989-90	39253
1990-91	42591
1991-92	34882
1992-93	27743
1993-94	33751
1994-95	30074
1995-96	33776
1996-97	29360
1997-98*	30001

*Provisional

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Sir, erstwhile, MITCO (now Mica Division of Minerals and Metals Trading Corporation, MMTC) set up in June 1973 is the canalising agency for export of Mica scrap, Mica blocks, splittings and films. However processed mica was decanalised in October 1990 but Mica scrap and factory cuttings/waste continue to be canalised. MITCO had started incurring losses since 1987-88 and was referred to BIFR during 1991-92. BIFR sanctioned Rehabilitation cum Amalgamation/Merger Scheme for revival of the Company. In terms of this scheme, MITCO was merged with MMTC and is functioning as the Mica Division with 425 employees.

Statement

Production, Exports & Consumption of Mica During Last 10 Years

Quantity in tonnes

Year	Production		Consumption
	Mica Crude	Waste & Scrap	(Incl. Ground/ Scrap Mica)
1987-88	4251	5518	9150*
1988-89	3886	3469	8750*
1989-90	4140	3557	9050
1990-91	4062	3366	8850
1991-92	3593	2364	8500
1992-93	2560	1758	8300
1993-94	2126	913	8300
1994-95	1988	1465	7850
1995-96	1832	1240	8150
1996-97	1954	1109	7950
1997-98(p)	1678	1088	N.A.

(p): Provisional, N.A.: Not Available, *: Pertains to Calendar Years 1987 & 1988

Promotion of mutual trade among SAARC Countries

2158. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:
SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether at the recent SAARC meet at Dhaka, Bangladesh, proposals for promotion of mutual trade among SAARC members were discussed;

(b) whether a proposal to constitute the SAARC countries into a Free Trade Zone has been under consideration; and

(c) if so, at what stage the matter stands at present?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) The First SAARC Information Ministers' Meeting at Dhaka, Bangladesh from 25-26 April 1998 discussed various means for increasing cooperation in the field of Information and Broadcasting. Promotion of mutual trade amongst SAARC members was not on the Agenda of the Meeting and hence was not discussed.

(b) and (c) The goal of establishing a South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) has been accepted by all SAARC member countries. It was initially decided that this should be achieved between the years 2002—2005. At the IXth Summit in Male, however, the SAARC leaders agreed that the target year for achieving this goal should be advanced to the year 2001. A SAARC Intergovernmental Group has identified the issues which would need to be addressed to ensure a smooth transition from South Asian Preferential Trading Area (SAPTA) to South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA).